

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

RALPH E. GOOD
1937-1992

Ralph E. Good conducted and championed noteworthy ecological research for almost 25 years in his active career as a botanist at Rutgers University—Camden, New Jersey. While his influence is especially evident in the Garden State, Dr. Good also devoted much energy and enthusiasm to the national business of several scientific societies. His service to the Ecological Society of America included 6 years as Business Manager, 10 years as Council member, and a term as Vice President (1982); our Society recognized his valued support with its Distinguished Service Award.

Ralph Good began his academic training at the University of Illinois with B.S. and M.S. degrees in botany (1960, 1961, with Dr. Larry Bliss). He focused in an ecological direction at Rutgers University—New Brunswick (Ph.D. 1965), with Murray F. Buell as his advisor. Ralph selected saltmarsh ecology for his doctoral research, and wetland studies were important to him throughout his career. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Wetlands Society because of his many studies of productivity and ecosystem function in a variety of wetland areas, from freshwater tidal marshes to regional watersheds. Graduate students found him a warm and encouraging



Dr. Good, right, in his favorite environment, the New Jersey Pinelands (1989 photo).

mentor. These students spoke of his energy, accessibility, and guidance towards excellence. He was sensitive to the humanness of doing science.

Ralph was a moving force in the 1977 Symposium on freshwater marshes. The Symposium soon resulted in the book *Freshwater Wetlands: Ecological Processes and Management Potential* (Good et al. 1978), which broke new ground in a scientific approach to wetland process and management. In his wetland studies, Ralph was one of the first to emphasize the importance of subsurface wetland biomass, and he was an early investigator of questions of nutrient and heavy metal retention.

His sincere commitment to graduate education was also reflected in his directorship of the Biology Graduate Program at Rutgers—Camden, and his graduate courses there (Plant Geography, Field Ecology, and Wetland Communities). During “spring break” his phytogeography classes would eagerly mount interstate expeditions.

Ralph contributed vigorously to the growth of the New Jersey Academy of Science by his service in councils and committees, and as President (1978–1980). The Academy recognized his many efforts with the Outstanding Service Award (1989), and subsequently honored his passing, sadly noting the Academy had lost a great friend.

In the spring of 1973 Ralph agreed to serve as Business Manager for the ESA following Clark Ashby. The business of the Society was in the midst of significant changes. The Society was growing, A.A. Lindsey, the first Managing Editor, had asked to be replaced, and Ashby had begun negotiations to shift the printing contract. Clark had prepared the groundwork well but Ralph had to deal with many changes during his first years in office. His careful approach and ability to sort out the facts as well as to keep the Society officers informed helped to move the changes smoothly. He faced many challenges and his considerate, yet firm letters prevented confrontations. He worked with his wife Norma in making needed changes in recordkeeping and other business operations. Coworkers in the ESA characterized Ralph as an innovative business manager, conscientious and effective.

With his professional career centered in southern New Jersey it was natural that he cultivated his love of the Pinelands, both as a scientist and public advocate. His Pineland ecosystem research involved many students and colleagues including Norma Good (plant ecologist as well as Ralph’s wife) with whom he coauthored many publications. He supervised the creation of the Rutgers

Division of Pineland Research in 1981 and served as director for more than a decade. During this time he worked closely with the state’s Pinelands Commission and other agencies concerned with planning regulations and management in the region. The extensive conservation efforts for the Pinelands required both his scientific expertise and a high level of political skill. Ralph was instrumental in the creation of the Pinelands National Reserve (Act of Congress, 1978) and in having the Pinelands designated as an International Biosphere Reserve (under the UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Program). Simultaneous with this preservation effort Ralph’s Pineland research continued, encompassing a variety of ecological topics, including regional geochemistry, vegetation dynamics, and the impact of acid rain and forest fragmentation. Postdoctoral fellows and interns were funded for this inter-disciplinary research at the Pinelands Research Station. (Over the years more than a million dollars of grants were obtained from a variety of governmental agencies and private foundations.)

Nationally, Ralph Good was also closely involved with the American Institute of Biological Sciences, particularly from 1980 to 1990 when his service included, at various times, the Governing Board, the Board of Directors, and Chairmanship of the Meetings Committee (4 years, with some great meetings!). He also served as the AIBS representative to ESA and enthusiastically supported many cooperative efforts between the two societies. Dedication to other groups included the Organization of Biological Field Stations and the Association of Ecosystem Research Centers. Closer to home, the Philadelphia and the Torrey Botanical Clubs benefitted from his editorial board contributions and his term as PBC president in 1973–1974.

Rutgers University proudly listed Dr. Good as a Distinguished Professor of Botany and as Director of various programs. Rutgers also extended him the University’s Presidential Award for Distinguished Public Service in preservation of the Pinelands. While serving the State on the Governor’s Science Advisory Committee, Ralph also worked hard toward the future of the N.J. State Aquarium at Camden (opened in 1992). His good citizenship was also reflected in the Chairmanship of the Camden Year-2000 Master Planning Committee.

Few are so fortunate to contribute so much, and it is especially sad that his untimely death came amid a remarkably productive period of his life. He

was an uncommon man, warm and outgoing. With his passing in December of 1991 he left both many friends and numerous enduring contributions to the field of ecology.

A few selected synthesis publications

Good, R.E., and N.F. Good. 1984. The Pinelands National Reserve: an ecosystem approach to management. *BioScience* 34:169–176.

Good, R.E., N.F. Good, and J. Andresen. 1979. The Pine Barren Plains. *In* R.T.T. Forman, editor. Pine Barrens: ecosystem and landscape. Academic Press, New York, New York, USA.

Good, R.E., D.F. Whigham, and R.L. Simpson, editors. 1978. Freshwater wetlands: ecological processes and management potential. Academic Press, New York, New York, USA.

Simpson, R.L., R.E. Good, M.A. Leck, and D.F. Whigham. 1983. The ecology of freshwater tidal wetlands. *BioScience* 33:255–259.

Whigham, D.F., R.E. Good, and J. Kvet, editors. 1990. Wetland ecology and management: case studies. Kluwer Academic, Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

Charles F. Leck
Department of Biological Sciences
Rutgers University
P.O. Box 1059
Piscataway, NJ

Forest Stearns
Forestry Sciences Laboratory
North Central Forest Experiment
Station, USFS
P.O. Box 898
Rhineland, WI